

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY RANGOON

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 098999

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

E.O. 11652: XGDS - 1

TAGS: SNAR, BM

SUBJECT:BURMESE AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON CONGRESSMAN WOLFF

REF: STATE 094656

1. ACCORDING TO GUB AMBASSADOR U TIN LATT, CONGRESSMAN
LESTER WOLFF AND J. HERBERT BURKE POSED MANY OF THE SAME
QUESTIONS TO HIM ON APRIL 12 AS WERE RAISED DURING HIS
STATE BRIEFING EARLIER ON THE SAME DAY. AFTER U TIN LATT
EXPLAINED THE BURMESE POLICY AGAINST PERMITTING FOREIGN
POLICE OFFICERS IN BURMA (SINCE PERMITTING U.S. AGENTS
WOULD OPEN THE DOOR TO SOVIET AND CHINESE AGENTS), WOLFF
INDICATED THAT A "NOMINAL" DEA PRESENCE IN RANGOON WOULD
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BE ACCEPTABLE. WOLFF ALSO ASKED ABOUT END-USE OF INC-
PROVIDED EQUIPMENT AND THE DELAY IN ATTACKS AGAINST BORDER
REFINERIES. THE AMBASSADOR STATES HE REPLIED THAT THE
EQUIPMENT IS ALSO USED DURING BCP OFFENSIVES AND THAT HE
BELIEVED THE DELAY TO BE CAUSED BY A SHORTAGE OF TROOPS
(ONE DIVISION OF FOUR IS NEW AND TWO OTHERS ARE DEPLOYED
ALONG THE CHINA BORDER). WOLFF ASKED WHETHER OR NOT THE

GUB COULD NEGOTIATE WITH THE ETHNIC MINORITIES AND U TIN LATT REPLIED THAT REMAINING LEADERS OF OPPOSITION GROUPS ARE NOW "NOTHING MORE THAN BUSINESSMEN" INTERESTED IN VARIOUS FORMS OF SMUGGLING ALONG THE BURMA-THAI BORDER

(INCLUDING NARCOTICS). WOLFF APPARENTLY ALSO ASKED ABOUT PRC INVOLVEMENT IN NARCOTICS AND SUPPORT FOR THE BCP. ALTHOUGH THE AMBASSADOR DID NOT DETAIL TO US HIS RESPONSE ON THIS TOPIC, WOLFF HAD IN THE EARLIER DEPARTMENT BRIEFING ALLUDED TO INFORMATION REPORTING OPIUM MOVING FROM BCP AREAS TO YUNNAN REFINERIES AND THENCE TO LAOS OR THAILAND FOR THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET. DEPARTMENT BRIEFER INDICATED SUCH REPORTS ARE NOT SUPPORTED BY U.S. INTELLIGENCE.

2. DURING THE MEETING, WOLFF REPORTEDLY INDICATED THAT HE HAD PREVIOUSLY WANTED TO VISIT BURMA IN 1977, BUT THAT THE DEPARTMENT TOLD HIM THIS WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE (WE ARE NOT AWARE OF ANY STATEMENT OF THIS KIND TO WOLFF). WHEN WOLFF STATED THAT HE THOUGHT HE WAS "PERSONA NON GRATA" IN RANGOON, THE AMBASSADOR REPLIED THAT HE HAD NO INDICATION THAT THE GUB HELD SUCH A VIEW. WOLFF ALSO INDICATED TO U TIN LATT THAT HE PLANNED TO VISIT BURMA DURING JULY, TO WHICH THE AMBASSADOR REPLIED THAT HE THOUGHT NOVEMBER WOULD BE A MORE COMFORTABLE MONTH TO VISIT. (WOLFF'S STAFF HAS INDICATED SUBSEQUENTLY THAT CONFIDENTIAL

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HE WILL NOT INCLUDE BURMA ON THE JUNE/JULY EAST ASIA TRIP).

3. U TIN LATT ALSO NOTED TO US THAT HE HAD RECEIVED MFA INSTRUCTIONS IN THE PAST TO STAY OUT OF NARCOTICS MATTERS, AND THAT HE WAS ONLY NOW AT THIS LATE DATE BECOMING INVOLVED. HE INDICATED HE HAD SENT A CABLE TO RANGOON IN MARCH OF LAST YEAR INFORMING THE FOREIGN MINISTRY THAT WOLFF WOULD BE VISITING BURMA. NO RESPONSE WAS RECEIVED TO THIS MESSAGE, WHICH U TIN LATT (NOW) INTERPRETS AS PROBABLY MEANING THAT THERE WAS NO OBJECTION TO THE VISIT AT THAT TIME. THE AMBASSADOR POINTED OUT, HOWEVER, THAT THE FACT THAT SELECT COMMITTEE STAFF MEMBERS SUBSEQUENTLY MET WITH CHANG CHI-FU IN THAILAND COULD AFFECT GUB CONSIDERATION OF A BURMA VISIT BY WOLFF. CHRISTOPHER

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